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Wayne Clingman's BTR Show

Film Reviews: Banshee!!! (2008) - By Duane L. Martin

Posted on Tuesday, March 02, 2010 @ 01:01:36 Mountain Standard Time by Duane



A group of college kids go on a spring break camping trip, only to be stalked and killed one by one by a creature straight out of Irish mythology...a

banshee. The creature can make them hallucinate, appearing as anyone it's seen, and it can kill with its shrieking howl or it's unbelievable speed and strength. In an effort to survive, the remaining campers make their way to a rural farmhouse where a guy and his nephew are holed up. The creature already killed the guy's wife. They had attempted to get away, but the creature appeared as the wife in front of the car, causing the man to grab the wheel and force them off the road, causing a severe crash. They've been sealed up in the farm house ever since just trying to survive until they can figure out a way to either get away or to summon help. Now, the the remaining college kids have arrived looking for shelter, and they must all work together if they're going to survive. But will they?

I've looked around at some different reviews and ratings for this film. I had kind of figured what I'd find, but I was curious, so I checked it out. Not surprisingly, the general consensus on this film is that it's

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not very good. On IMDB it only has a 3.4 out of 10 rating. Other ratings I saw for it were similar. However, I'm going to buck this trend. I've never been afraid of disagreeing with the crowd and their general opinions, so that's exactly what I'm going to do here. I actually liked this movie. Now mind you, I didn't say I loved it, but I did like it, and I certainly liked it enough to recommend it. So what did I see that others missed? Well...

I guess I'll start with the characters. The college kids were all basically throw away, cardboard cutout characters, except for one. Lake (Tony Walcott) was actually a really fun character. He was like the comedy relief, and he had one of the funniest lines I've heard in a movie in a long time, which I won't spoil here. The uncle, Jack (Kevin Shea) was also a great character, and his nephew Rocker (David McCarthy) wasn't bad either. The uncle had a bit of eccentricity of about him, while his nephew was rather stoic and played it low key and rather normal, even though he was a rock musician. Still, despite most of the characters being throw aways, they weren't generally as annoying or as two-dimensional as the characters we so often see in films like this.

Then there's the monster. It was mostly CGI, but it was really well done and looked great. The ways it would stalk and kill its prey were creative and really added a huge level of tension to the film. I wish more films had monsters that added this level of suspense and terror to the story.

Something else that really struck me as well was the set design and costuming. Everything and everyone looked exactly the way they should have looked. I'm not sure how big of a consideration it was in the grand scheme of getting this film made, but whoever did the set design and wardrobe did a great job. The film was dark and suspenseful and everything visually just seemed to fall into place.

The production quality was all quite good as well. The camera work was great, the sound was clear and understandable throughout, the CGI and other visuals were all very well done and the editing kept

everything moving along nicely, without getting too hung up on any particular aspect of the story.

So basically, I liked it. I know a lot of people didn't care for it, but I did. I almost wonder sometimes if people who are really into horror almost become snobbish about it. They have these pre-conceived notions about what makes a great horror film, and they're so busy looking for those elements that they forget to just relax and enjoy the film on its own merits, and then when the film doesn't meet up to their standards, they actively go out of their way to tell everyone it wasn't very good. I would never even consider painting all horror fans with such a wide brush, but I would be willing to bet that a certain small percentage of the horror buffs out there fall into that category, which is why films like this have a hard time getting a fair shake.

This film was shown on Chiller, which for those who don't have it, is basically the SyFy channel for horror. Was it made specifically for that channel like the SyFy original movies are made for the Syfy channel? I have no idea. I think the general concensus on the Syfy original movies is that many of them are cheap and sucky with crappy CGI, some are pretty decent and a few here and there have even managed to be really good. This movie is similar in quality to those SyFy originals, but is actually better in many ways. It has that kind of a feel, to it, but the overall quality is really very good.

With any film, the only thing that really matters is, did you enjoy it, or do you feel like you wasted your time. It could be filled with technical problems or other issues, but in the final conclusion, all that really matters is wether or not you actually enjoyed watching it. Setting aside everything else, the enjoyment factor is what tips the scales on whether a film can be recommended or not. In this case, I happened to enjoy this film quite a bit, and I have no problem at all recommending it. I think if I was to give it a rating out of 10, like the IMDB rating, I'd put it at around a 7.5. It's not perfect, and many of the characters could have been made more interesting, but for what it is, it certainly

deserves a better rating than the 3.4 it has on there currently.

If you'd like to find out more about this film, you can check out its MySpace page at <http://www.myspace.com/bansheemovie>.

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